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Sermon Preached at the Induction of a Professor at One of Our Colleges.

EPH. 4, 8. 11. 12.

DEAR FRIENDS IN CHRIST: —

You know for what purpose we have assembled. It is the installation of —, who is to give his whole time and attention to the instruction and training of students at our college. The professor, as a student, entered — College and later the St. Louis Seminary with the active ministry in view. In other words, when matriculating and studying at these institutions he did not have a professorship in mind, but looked for a call to some pastorate or mission-field. And he was duly ordained to the holy ministry.

And now the question arises, Is he not making a serious mistake by teaching at a college instead of following the high vocation he himself had in mind when entering college as a student? And is not the Church making a mistake in calling ordained ministers or even men from successful pastorates to serve as teachers at her colleges? Our answer, based on our text, is: —

*A PASTOR WHO HAS BEEN CALLED TO A PROFESSORSHIP
AT ONE OF OUR COLLEGES IS NOT MAKING A MISTAKE
IN FOLLOWING THAT CALL.*

For,

1. *The work in the Lord's vineyard is diversified;*
2. *A teacher at a Lutheran divinity school is working in the Lord's vineyard.*

1.

True, the office which preaches the saving Gospel to fallen mankind, which converts the child of wrath into a child of grace and heir to eternal life; which receives the infant child into the communion of saints through Holy Baptism; which then feeds the lambs with the sincere milk of the Word; which recalls the erring,

strengthens the faltering, and sustains the believers by Word and Sacrament; which gives the dying the firm assurance of salvation and to the survivors the hope of a reunion in eternal bliss, — this office, or calling, is unquestionably the most exalted on earth. Very properly the apostle wrote to young Timothy: "This is a true saying, If a man desire the office of a bishop [a pastor], he desireth a good work."

However, the work in the Lord's vineyard is diversified and necessarily must be in order to achieve the one great end, the saving of souls. The Church here on earth is called the Church Militant; we are soldiers of the Cross. An army may prove unsuccessful in an expedition, not because the soldiers and general are not brave or their arms not adequate, but perhaps because the commissary, or transportation, or sanitation, or means of communication, or some other needed branch of the service failed them. So we see the need of diversified, but united action. How disastrous it would be for the head commander to say, Since the one important point is the shooting or destruction of the enemy, let us pay no attention whatever to any other branch of the service. Any novice would tell him that he could not succeed. In like manner it would not do for the Church to argue, Inasmuch as the actual preaching of the Gospel is our ultimate aim, therefore let us ignore all our other church activities.

We see a further illustration of this in the threefold office of Christ — of Prophet, Priest, and King. These are not arbitrary subdivisions, but clearly recognized by Scripture and the Church. But shall we spend time in asking, Which is the more important? We know Christ died on the cross as our High Priest and there said, "It is finished." But does His work of preaching the life-giving Gospel, as our Prophet, or of ruling and governing the Church, as our King, therefore sink into insignificance? And as to the diversified activities of the Church, which is of the greater importance, home missions or foreign missions? a city or a country charge? teaching in a parish-school or in the more advanced synodical schools? being in the active ministry as a pastor or filling a chair at a divinity school? After all, each of these activities is needed in the Church and in each men are serving the same Lord in His vineyard.

Turning to our text, we find a reference made to apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors, and teachers, but no reference is made to the relative importance of their labors. When the Lord called laborers into His vineyard and afterwards gave them each their hire, it is significant that he did not allude to any graded importance of their work. The apostle, in 1 Cor. 12, wants all idle disputes on pre-eminence and relative importance discarded. He brings out that every member of the body is needed and is of distinct importance in its place, so much so, that if one member suffers, all of them do, and

if one member is honored, all of them share in this honor. Dr. Walther once told his students: The final day will spring many a surprise. Many a pastor and missionary who has been working in obscurity will hear the words: "Well done, thou good and faithful servant! Thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things. Enter thou into the joy of thy Lord." Incidentally let us remark that the professors at our institutions very frequently fill pulpits, or even regularly serve missions and congregations in addition to their regular work.

However, whatever your calling may be, it is important, very important, because the *Lord* placed you where you are, and the work He gave you to do in the service of your fellow-beings and His own is well worth doing, simply because *He* privileged you to do it. He, the Head of the Church, would not give you a calling that is trivial, unimportant, or useless. Do not think little of it, but do it well, even though others belittle it. Depend upon it, your faithful performance of every-day duties, even your patient endurance of trials and sickness, is called for in the furtherance of Christ's cause.

We have seen that the work in the Lord's vineyard is diversified, that every Christian, in his honest calling, is a coworker with Christ, and so it remains to be shown that a teacher at a Lutheran divinity school is also in this class, namely, a worker in the Lord's vineyard.

2.

The Church has but one office or command: "Go ye, therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost." The salvation of souls is to be the one end and aim. In order to achieve this fully, the Church should see not only to a present supply of pastors who feed and guard the flock, but should realize that recruits must be supplied who will take up the shepherd's staff when old age or death wrings it from his hands. Indeed, if the Church hopes to expand, she must supply more workers than the immediate needs demand. The truth of this does not always come home to us in its stern reality, for when a vacancy occurs, we easily get a list of candidates, or we call on our seminaries for supply. But in far-off countries or in isolated missions the danger is that if the pastor breaks down, his whole work may break down with him, and we should see to it that our mission boards have at their disposal ample men and means not only to fill vacancies, but to enter at the many open doors and to heed the calls for help.

To prepare future pastors at a Lutheran divinity school is therefore distinctly a part of following up the divine command to preach the Gospel. This is what our newly called professor is to do on his part. To do this right, it is self-evident that the teacher himself must be a true Christian, lest, while leading others to light, he himself may be

walking in darkness; he must not merely instil knowledge, but must endeavor, by precept and example, to lead his pupils to Christ and to imbue them with fervor and love for the exalted vocation of saving souls. To do this effectively, the faculty must work in harmony; above all, all its members must have the proper Biblical convictions. This, thank God, is true at — College. This institution, like her sister colleges of the same synodical affiliation, stands out like a light shining in a dark place.

You know that evolution is rife in practically all secular schools, higher and lower, and in very many denominational institutions. We may not agree with Mr. William Jennings Bryan in all his political views, but let us honor him for his firm and conservative religious convictions in battling against the rank evolution as it is taught the country over, which ridicules the Biblical record of creation and belittles the doctrine of inspiration and of miracles. In rebutting an attack made by President Birge, of Madison, Wis., Mr. Bryan says: "I have been informed that Dr. Birge teaches a Sunday-school class; but that cannot have any weight in this controversy until we know *what* he teaches. If he teaches his Sunday-school class that man has brute blood in him, and that he was not made by a separate act in the image of God and put here, as the Bible tells us he was, as a part of God's plan, the more he teaches, the more harm he does. In my opinion a professing Christian who takes that view does more harm than any person could do who admitted himself an atheist. I affirm that no teacher paid by taxation has a right to rob the student of faith in God, draw him out from belief in the inspiration of the Bible, and shut out his hope of immortality by teaching him the brute doctrine, without a fact in the universe to support it and irreconcilable with the Bible."

In another connection Bryan said: "It may be all right for our children to study geology, but it is far more important for them to know about the Rock of Ages than about the ages of the rocks."

Few are the prominent laymen who lift their voice in warning against this godless irreligion, but Bryan is not the only one. Governor R. A. Nestos, of North Dakota, strongly arraigned all educators who attack religion. Said he in part: "During the past two years, as I have been traveling around the State, I have frequently learned of parents who had sent a beloved son or daughter to one of the state institutions, and, upon return of the son or daughter at the end of the year, in sorrow had learned that their children had become scorers of religious truths and professed agnostics. I can sympathize with a father and mother who from the teachings of childhood and the experience of a lifetime have reached the conclusion that their faith and religious experience meant more to them than anything in life and constitute, if followed by the children, a greater guarantee of

their success and happiness in life than anything else that can be done for them, and then discover that some teacher whose salary they are helping to pay has sought to dynamite every foundation of the faith that is theirs."

Over against this, while we cannot claim for — College any particular prominence among the institutions of learning, and while the fact that you are connected with — College as teacher or pupil is not a mark of great distinction with the world, it is, thank God, a fact that our college has chosen the better part, — like Mary ever hearing and heeding the words of the divine Teacher and willingly bearing the taunt that this is unprogressive. What is the Church here for if not to be a light shining in darkness to lead lost and forlorn men to their Savior?

And now a word to the students. Our text says: "He gave some, apostles," etc. These great gifts are especially mentioned as a fruit of Christ's ascension. *Apostles* were directly called by the Master, furnished with extraordinary gifts and infallibility in delivering His truths. *Prophets* — the word reminds us of Old Testament times; in this connection they, no doubt, were men endowed with the gift peculiar to apostolic times, of foretelling things to come, and would also expound the writings of Holy Writ. *Evangelists* were ordained persons (2 Tim. 1, 6), whom the apostles took for their companions in travel (Gal. 2, 1); they were also sent out to build up and strengthen such churches as the apostles had planted. Acts 19, 22; 2 Tim. 4, 9. *Pastors and teachers* are terms we are familiar with in our day.

Since a godly teacher is a gift of our Lord, how are you going to show your appreciation? Bear in mind, in the first place, that the gift comes from the risen Savior, who loves you even unto death. When you receive a gift from a relative or friend who loves you dearly, this fact enhances the value of the gift in your eyes immensely, does it not?

Furthermore, if this loving friend of yours were very rich, his gift would be of great value in proportion. When Christ, the Lord of heaven and earth, gives you a gift as the fruit of His resurrection and ascension, it is worth taking. More than that, it is worth using. The proper use of this gift will show the proper appreciation. Speaking of your teacher, he does not look for applause and laudatory remarks, he does not expect you to extol him above all others, but give him hearty cooperation in class and out of class. Do not expect him to work for you, but work *with* him and let him show you how to work.

In fine, let us all — teachers, students, church-members — work together for the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ. Amen.

Winfield, Kans.

A. W. MEYER.

Dispositionen über die neue epistolische Perikopenreihe der Synodalkonferenz.

Siebter Sonntag nach Trinitatis.

Eph. 4, 29—32.

Wir Christen sollen einen gottseligen Wandel führen. Gottes Wille und Gebot. 1 Petr. 2, 12: „Führet einen guten Wandel unter den Heiden!“ Kol. 1, 10: „Wandelt würdiglich dem Herrn zu allem Gefallen!“ 1 Mos. 17, 1: „Wandle vor mir und sei fromm!“ Tit. 2, 12: „züchtig, gerecht und gottselig leben in dieser Welt“. Das haben wir auch in der Schule aus Luthers Katechismus gelernt. Erste Bitte: „heilig als die Kinder Gottes danach leben“. Zweite Bitte: „göttlich leben, hier zeitlich und dort ewiglich“. Schluß der Gebote: „Darum sollen wir ihn auch lieben und vertrauen und gerne tun nach seinen Geboten.“ Auf Grund unsers Textes wollen wir heute reden

Vom Wandel der Christen.

Sehen wir,

1. wie sich der Wandel der Christen in etlichen Stücken erweist;
2. warum wir einen gottseligen Wandel führen sollen.

1.

Der Apostel greift in unserm Text nur etliche Stücke des christlichen Wandels heraus. Wir können in dieser kurzen Zeit auch nicht den ganzen Wandel der Christen betrachten, sonst müßten wir alle zehn Gebote durchgehen.

W. 29: „Lasset kein faul Geschwätz aus eurem Munde gehen!“ Geschwätz ist ein inhaltloses, geistloses, kraftloses Gespräch. Ein geschwätziger Mann oder eine schwatzhafte Frau kann eine ganze Gesellschaft verderben. „Faul Geschwätz“ ist alles Reden gegen Gottes heiliges Gesetz. Was faul ist, verbreitet einen üblen Geruch. Dahin gehören allerlei lose Reden, unnütze, unsittliche, unkeusche Gespräche, zotige Lieder, „schandbare Worte, Narrenteidinge oder Scherz, welche euch nicht ziemen“. Wohl darf man zur Unterhaltung auch einmal einen Scherz machen, aber dabei sollen die Grenzen der Wohlstandigkeit und Ehrbarkeit nicht überschritten werden. Faul Geschwätz ist ein Zeichen, daß inwendig im Menschen schon alles faul ist. „Ein böshastiger Mensch bringt Böses hervor aus dem bösen Schatz seines Herzens“, Luk. 6, 45. „Aus dem Herzen kommen arge Gedanken“ usw., Matth. 15, 19. Wenn ein Christ in solche Gesellschaft kommt, was ja manchmal vorkommen kann, dann soll er nicht mit den Wölfen heulen, sondern durch sein Verhalten im Gespräch oder durch sein Weggehen bezeugen, daß er nicht zu den Wölfen gehört.

Durch faules Geschwätz befudelt sich der Christ. „Was aber zum Munde herausgehet, das verunreiniget den Menschen“, Matth. 15, 18. Dadurch wird viel Schaden angerichtet. „Böse Geschwätze verderben gute Sitten.“ Man schadet sich selbst. Darum: „Wer leben will und gute Tage sehen, der schweige seine Zunge“ usw., 1 Petr. 3, 10. Man schadet auch andern. „Ihre Zungen sind scharfe Schwerter“, Ps. 57, 5. „Die Zunge ist auch ein Feuer, eine Welt voll Ungerechtigkeit“, Jak. 3, 6. Darum laßt uns unsere Worte auf der Goldwaage wägen, ehe wir sie über unsere Lippen gleiten lassen!

Anstatt faulen Geschwätzes sollen wir vielmehr holdselige Reden führen. B. 29: „daß es holdselig sei zu hören“; Ps. 4, 8: „Was ehrbar, was gerecht, was keusch, was lieblich, was wohl lautet“; B. 29: „nützlich zur Besserung“. Unser Gespräch soll zur Besserung, zur Erbauung dienen, soll dem Nächsten Nutzen bringen. „Wo es not tut“, B. 29, wo Bedürfnis vorhanden ist, sollen wir unsere Mitmenschen belehren, ermahnen, stärken, ermuntern, daß sie im Glauben gefördert werden. Wir sollen ein Salz der Welt sein, das sie vor Fäulnis bewahren soll.

Weiter geht der Apostel in das fünfte Gebot und nennt „Bitterkeit, Grimm, Zorn, Geschrei, Lästerung“, B. 31. „Bitterkeit“, ein bitteres Gefühl, gehässige Stimmung gegen den Nächsten. „Grimm“, Groll, innere Aufwallung, Gemütsregung, wozu die bittere Stimmung sich steigert. Der Apostel geht der Sache auf den Grund: Bitterkeit und Grimm ist der Zustand des Herzens, der faules Geschwätz hervorbringt. „Geschrei“, daß man den Nächsten mit lauten Worten anfährt. Und die heftige Rede klingt dann aus in „Lästerung“, in Schmähreden und Scheltworten. Daß der Apostel nicht noch weiter fortfährt und davon redet, wie Bitterkeit und Grimm auch in Taten ausbricht, wie ein grimmiger Mensch schließlich auch mit Fäusten dreinschlägt, kommt daher, daß er hier zu Christen redet, die sich bezähmen und es nicht zur Tat kommen lassen.

Mit Grimm hängt eng zusammen „Zorn“. Laßt den Zorn in einem Menschen erwachen und seht, wie sich sein Angesicht entstellt und verfinstert, wie die Bosheit aus seinen Augen leuchtet, wie er um sich schlägt. Welche Verwüstung richtet der Zorn an in Familien zwischen Gatten, Eltern und Kindern und Geschwistern! Wenn ein Mann ein zorniges Weib hat, deren scheltende Stimme von früh bis spät im Hause gehört wird, die dem Manne oft tagelang kein gutes Wort, keinen freundlichen Blick gönnt, wird das Haus da nicht zur Hölle? Selbst Sirach sagt: „Kein bitterer Zorn ist als der Zorn eines Weibes.“ Oder wenn eine Frau einen zornigen Mann hat, vor dem sie mit den Kindern erzittert, wenn er ins Haus tritt, wenn er mitunter die ganze Wirtschaft kurz und klein schlägt, welch eine Stätte des Jammers und der Tränen ist ein solches Haus! Der Frau wird das Leben zur drückenden Last.

Nange nicht an, dich zu entschuldigen: „Ich bin nun einmal so; was kann ich dafür? Ich kann den Born nicht aus meinem Herzen reißen.“ Bitte Gott, daß er dir deine Bosheit vergebe, und dann schaue an Christi Exempel, Matth. 11, 28: „Ich bin sanftmütig und von Herzen demütig.“ „Seid langsam zum Born!“ Jak. 1, 19. „Lasset die Sonne nicht über eurem Born untergehen!“ Eph. 4, 26. „Wer mit seinem Bruder zürnet“ usw., Matth. 5, 22.

Schließlich faßt der Apostel alles zusammen in das Wort „Bosheit“, R. 31: „So leget nun von euch ab alle . . . Bosheit.“ Wir sollen nicht Böses mit Bösem vergelten.

Wie wir statt dessen wandeln sollen. R. 32: „Seid untereinander freundlich!“ Wir sollen unsern Nächsten wie einen Freund behandeln. „Herzlich“; wir sollen ein Herz für ihn haben. „Vergebet einer dem andern!“ Wir sollen dem Nächsten sein Unrecht verzeihen. Kol. 3, 13: „Vergebet euch untereinander!“ Mark. 11, 25: „Vergebet, wo ihr etwas wider jemand habt!“ „Die Liebe decket auch der Sünden Menge.“ — Wie sollen wir unserm Beleidiger vergeben? Von Herzen. Wir sollen ihm die Schuld nicht wieder aufbürden. Wie oft sollen wir vergeben? Sooft er sich an uns versündigt. Warum sollen wir vergeben? „Gleichwie Gott euch vergeben hat in Christo“, R. 32. Matth. 18, 27: „Die Schuld erließ er ihm auch.“ Ps. 103, 3: „der dir alle deine Sünden vergibt“. Luk. 6, 36: „Seid barmherzig, wie auch euer Vater barmherzig ist!“ Vorbilder: Stephanus; Joseph, der seinen Brüdern vergibt. Wer seinem Nächsten nicht vergeben will, hat auch bei Gott keine Vergebung, Matth. 6, 15.

Seht, so sollten die Menschen wandeln — alle Menschen, besonders die Christen, die Lutheraner. Welchem viel gegeben ist, von dem wird man viel fordern. „Der Knecht, der seines Herrn Willen weiß“ usw., Luk. 12, 47. Wie steht es bei uns? Suchen wir nach Gottes Willen und Gebot zu wandeln? Meiden wir alles faule Geschwäg? Bekämpfen wir unsern Grimm und Born? Sind wir immer herzlich und freundlich?

Damit wir so wandeln können, dazu bedürfen wir des Heiligen Geistes. Röm. 8, 13: „durch den Geist des Fleisches Geschäfte töten“. Gal. 5, 22: „Die Frucht des Geistes ist: Liebe“ usw. Ps. 143, 10: „Dein guter Geist führe mich auf ebener Bahn.“ Darum bitten wir: „Das hilf uns, lieber Vater im Himmel!“

Freilich wird unser Wandel hier auf Erden nicht vollkommen. Wir müssen alle klagen: „Das Gute, das ich will, das tue ich nicht“, Röm. 7, 19. „Nicht daß ich's schon ergriffen habe oder schon vollkommen sei“, Phil. 3, 12. Obwohl aber der Wandel nicht vollkommen ist, so jagen Christen doch der Heiligung nach. In der Heiligung gibt es Wachstum, Fortschritt.

2.

Warum wir einen gottseligen Wandel führen sollen. Dafür könnte man viele Gründe anführen: Gott hat es geboten. Christus hat uns erlöst, damit wir in einem neuen Leben wandeln. Wir sind Kinder Gottes und sollen unserm himmlischen Vater keine Schande machen. Gottseliger Wandel bringt Segen. Wohl dem, der auf Gottes Wegen geht! Gottseliger Wandel schafft Frucht für andere Menschen. 1 Petr. 3, 1: „durch der Weiber Wandel ohne Wort gewonnen“. Matth. 5, 16: „euren Vater im Himmel preisen“. Man könnte auch von dem Schaden reden, der durch bösen Wandel angerichtet wird. Argernis geben. Gottes Name wird dadurch gelästert unter den Heiden. Man könnte von dem Gericht und der Strafe reden, die auf bösen Wandel folgt: Wir müssen Rechenschaft geben von einem jeglichen unnützen Wort. „Gott drohet zu strafen alle, die diese Gebote übertreten.“

Der Apostel führt hier aber nur einen Grund an (V. 30): „Betrübet nicht den Heiligen Geist!“ Der Heilige Geist ist Gott, wie der Vater und der Sohn. Gott kann man eigentlich gar nicht betrüben. Bei Gott gibt es keinen Wechsel von Freud' und Leid. Niemand kann Gott in seiner Seligkeit stören. Die Schrift redet hier auf menschliche Weise. Ein Mensch wird betrübt, wenn seine Hausgenossen nicht tun, was er gern hat, oder tun, was er nicht will. Ein Christ wird betrübt, wenn er aus dem Munde seiner Mitmenschen Böses reden hört. Und so sagt nun die Schrift auch vom Heiligen Geist, daß er betrübt wird, wenn man nicht tut, was er will.

Was will der Heilige Geist von uns? Er will uns heiligen. Er will vor allem, daß wir erleuchtet werden und zur Buße und Glauben kommen, daß wir Christum als unsern Heiland und Erlöser erkennen. Wer ohne Buße dahingeht, betrübt fort und fort den Heiligen Geist. Darum wende dich ab von der Welt und von der Sünde. Betrübe nicht den Heiligen Geist!

Der Heilige Geist will aber auch, daß wir ein gottseliges Leben führen. Wer noch in Sünden dahingeht, faules Geschwätz über seine Lippen fließen läßt, der Bitterkeit, dem Grimm und Zorn in seinem Herzen Raum gibt, betrübt den Heiligen Geist. Der Schall der faulen Worte vertreibt, aber die Worte werden vernommen vom Heiligen Geist, der in uns wohnt.

Warum ist das nun so folgenreich, den Heiligen Geist zu betrüben? Dadurch kann man ihn aus dem Herzen hinaustreiben. Der Geist Gottes wohnt in uns wie in einem Tempel, 1 Kor. 3, 16. Er arbeitet fort und fort an unserm Herzen, lehrt uns, tröstet uns (Lied 184, 3), gibt Zeugnis unserm Geist, Röm. 8, 16, läßt uns den Frieden Gottes schmecken und fühlen (Lied 265, 2), stärkt unsere Hoffnung und tut uns viel Gutes. Seine Liebe zu uns ist unendlich. Aber wenn wir ihn betrüben, wird das Verhältnis zwischen uns und ihm gestört, und

schließlich kann es so weit kommen, daß wir ihn aus dem Herzen hinausträngen. O wie öde und leer sieht es dann aus! Dann geht auf einmal die Leuchte unter, und es wird finster.

Dazu kommt aber noch eins: B. 30: „damit ihr versiegelt seid auf den Tag der Erlösung“. Ein Siegel drückt man auf ein Schriftstück, um es zu beglaubigen, sich dazu zu bekennen oder es gegen fremden Anspruch sicherzustellen. Auch der Heilige Geist ist ein Siegel, das uns Gott aufgedrückt hat. Durch die Predigt haben wir den Heiligen Geist empfangen. Dadurch sind wir nun versiegelt, vergewissert, daß wir nicht mehr dem Fürsten dieser Welt angehören, nicht mehr dem Verderben der Welt anheimfallen sollen, sondern Gottes Eigentum sind. Wir sind versiegelt auf den Tag der Erlösung. Das ist Gottes Absicht, daß wir den Tag der Erlösung, das Ziel, erreichen. Der in uns angefangen hat das gute Werk, der will es auch vollenden. O welch ein herrlicher Tag muß das sein: erlöst von allem übel! Darum sollen wir aber nun auch den Heiligen Geist nicht durch bösen Wandel betrüben, daß das Ziel, das der Heilige Geist hat, nicht noch vereitelt werde. Das wäre traurig: Schon so nahe am Ziel und schließlich doch verloren gehen!

Wie steht es mit uns? Haben wir den Heiligen Geist betrübt? Wir müssen uns schuldig geben. Wir wollen Gott um Gnade und Vergebung bitten. Was bisher geschehen ist, will Gott in Gnaden austreiben. Wir wollen nun aber auch den Vorsatz fassen, daß wir den Heiligen Geist nicht aufs neue betrüben. Wem wollen wir hinfort dienen, Gott oder der Sünde? Wir wollen alle sprechen: „Ich aber und mein Haus wollen dem Herrn dienen.“ E. E.

Neunter Sonntag nach Trinitatis.

1 Tim. 6, 6—10. *)

Man hört oft sagen, das Christentum sei nicht praktisch; denn das Christentum lehre, die eigentliche Heimat des Menschen sei im Himmel, und diese Erde sei nur eine Fremde. Dies anderweltliche Ziel, so meint man, mache den Christen unfähig, für das leibliche Wohl seiner Familie und für das Wohl des Staates recht Sorge zu tragen. Dem ist aber nicht so. Wir Christen sind Himmelsbürger, aber solange wir in dieser sterblichen Hütte wohnen, haben wir den Befehl von Gott, durch unserer Hände Arbeit uns und die Anrigen wohl zu versorgen, 1 Tim. 5, 8, auch die übrigen Brocken aufzuheben, Joh. 6, 12, und der Stadt Bestes zu suchen, Jer. 29, 7. Der Christ ist nicht kalt und stumpf gegen die Bedürfnisse des Leibes, sondern eben weil er sich als einen Himmelsbürger weiß, sucht er sich und die Seinen hier auf Erden durch fleißige und ehrliche Arbeit zu ernähren und erweist sich als einen guten, strebsamen Bürger des Staates.

Es herrscht aber in unsern Tagen ein Geist des Materialismus,

*) E. Kregmann, Die Pastoralbriefe, S. 174—180.

dessen entschiedener und unversöhnlicher Feind das Christentum ist. Dieser Weltgeist zeigt sich in dem Streben, Rennen und Jagen nach Reichtum. Mammon ist der Gott, den die Menschen unserer Lage anbeten, dem sie huldigen, dem sie dienen. Dieser Geldgier setzt das Christentum die christliche Genügsamkeit entgegen. Die Menschen meinen, die Genügsamkeit sei ein Verlust. Das Christentum zeigt, daß sie ein Gewinn ist. Die Menschen meinen, die Geldgier sei ein Gewinn; das Christentum zeigt, daß sie ein Verlust ist.

Läßt uns genügsame Christen sein!

Denn

1. die Genügsamkeit ist ein großer Gewinn;
2. die Geldgier ist eine große Gefahr.

1.

Die Frömmigkeit ist ein großer Gewinn, wenn sie mit Genügsamkeit verbunden ist. Ein Christ läßt sich begnügen an dem, was Gott ihm durch fleißiges Beten, ehrliche Arbeit und christliche Sparsamkeit darreicht, mag das nun nach dem Urtheil der Welt viel oder wenig sein. Sein Herz hängt nicht an irdischem Geld und Gut, sondern an Gott. So ist die Genügsamkeit in Wahrheit ein Gewinn, zwar kein Geldgeschäft und Geldgewinn, aber dennoch ein wirklicher Gewinn, nämlich für die Seele. Ein wahrhaft gottseliger Christ ist ein zufriedener Mensch. Die Zufriedenheit ist ein unentbehrliches Stück der wahren Frömmigkeit. Nur wenn wir zufrieden sind mit dem, was Gott uns im Irdischen gibt, können wir Gott in wahrer Liebe die Huldigung unsers Herzens darbringen und ihm fröhlich vertrauen. Nur der zufriedene Christ ist der in Gott selige, der Gott liebende, ihm vertrauende und ihm dienende Christ. Der wahre Christ weiß den unvergleichlichen Reichtum der geistlichen Güter in Christo Jesu zu schätzen. Die Gnade Gottes, Vergebung der Sünden und die Hoffnung des ewigen Lebens sind sein größter Reichtum, sein Schatz und Theil. Und für alles, was er für dieses Leibes Nahrung und Nothdurft bedarf, vertraut er seinem versöhnten, liebevollen und allmächtigen himmlischen Vater. Hebr. 13, 5; Ps. 73, 25. 26; 23, 1; 34, 11; Matth. 6, 24—34; Eph. 1, 3. Seine Seele ruht in Gott und ist allem Reid und aller Habsucht, allem Bank und Streit abhold, und so genießt er ein stilles, ruhiges Leben im Frieden.

Der Tand und der Schein des Goldes kann die frommen, zufriedenen Christen nicht blenden. Die Augen ihres Verständnisses bleiben offen, so daß sie sowohl die Vergänglichkeit der irdischen Güter, W. 7, als auch die Entbehrlichkeit großer irdischer Güter und Gaben erkennen, W. 8. Wer wollte um der vergänglichen Güter willen die unvergänglichen, geistlichen Güter, wegen des entbehrlichen irdischen Reichtums den unentbehrlichen himmlischen Reichtum verschmerzen? Ps. 49, 17 ff.; Luk. 12, 15—21; Ps. 37, 5. (Lied 363; 375, 2.) O laßt uns die

Kunst der christlichen Genügsamkeit lernen! Phil. 4, 11. Meister sind wir darin nicht; aber alle müssen wir in der Schule der Genügsamkeit sein, und es muß unser Bestreben sein, immer zufriedeneren Christen zu werden, die für die Zukunft in kindlich frohem Sinn Gott vertrauen. Sagen wir nicht dem Gelde nach, sondern der Genügsamkeit!

2.

Zur Genügsamkeit soll uns Christen auch die große Gefahr bewegen, die Geldgier mit sich bringt, B. 9. 10.

Nicht der Reichtum, das Reichsein, an und für sich wird beurteilt, obgleich es wahr ist, daß Leute, die mit irdischen Gütern reich gesegnet sind, auch mit außerordentlichen Versuchungen und Gefahren kämpfen müssen, Matth. 19, 23 f.; Luk. 18, 25. Aber entschieden wird das Reichwerden wollen als unchristlich gebrandmarkt. Wer da lebt und arbeitet und sich abmüht und plant, um reich zu werden, der hat ein unchristliches Lebensziel. Die da reich werden wollen, können nicht von Herzen bekennen: „Christus ist mein Leben“, Phil. 1, 21; Gal. 2, 20; Phil. 3, 20, sondern ihr Reden, ihr Handeln, ihr Bestreben legt ihnen die Worte in den Mund: Ich lebe, um, wo möglich, reich zu werden.

Die Geldgierigen fallen in Versuchung, in Sündenreiz, werden von allerlei Sünden gereizt und gelockt, und ehe sie sich's versehen, liegen sie im Fallstrick gebunden: Lügen, Kompromisse mit der Welt, Ungerechtigkeit im Geschäft und Handel, Abstumpfung des Gewissens, geistliche Blindheit, Vernachlässigung des Bibellebens, des Kirchenbesuchs, des Betens usw. Die Begierde, das Trachten nach Reichtum hat sie gefesselt und dadurch das ganze Ziel ihres Lebens verrückt. Sie suchen nicht, wie gottselig, sondern wie reich sie werden können. Damit ist der Weg zum gänzlichen Abfall von Gott angebahnt. Sie fallen in „viel törichte und schädliche Lüste“. Für das Irdische wird das Geistliche, für das Weltliche das Himmlische, für das Vergängliche das Ewige drangegeben! Geistliches und ewiges Verderben ist ihr endliches Los. — Wie die Einzelperson, so stürzt die Geldgier auch ganze Nationen ins Verderben. Das Sagen nach dem „allmächtigen Dollar“ hat Sittenverfall mit sozialem und nationalem Untergang zur Folge. Man will reich werden, nicht um Gutes zu tun, sondern um den bösen Lüsten des Fleisches frönen zu können. Es gibt kein Übel, das nicht aus der Geldliebe erwachsen kann. Das ist der Fluch der Geldsucht, daß sie forzeugend Böses muß gebären. Die Wurzel ist böse, darum müssen die Früchte auch böse sein. Der Apostel redet aus Erfahrung. Einige, die er kannte — sie waren Christen —, haben sich der Geldliebe hingegeben, und die Geldliebe hat die Liebe zu Gott allmählich erstickt. Sie sind vom Glauben abgeirrt, und anstatt wahre Freude zu finden, haben sie den kalten Stahl sich ins Herz gebohrt. Allerlei Qualen beunruhigen sie, Gewissensbisse, Sorge, wie sie ihren Reichtum festhalten und sichern

können, Angst und Furcht des Todes usf. Arme, bedauernswerte Sklaven des Gottes Mammon! Sie haben ihm fleißig gedient, und er speist sie ab mit vielen Schmerzen und endlich mit den Qualen der Hölle!

Wer die Gefahren der Geldgier erblickt hat, sollte der nicht umkehren und Buße tun, in Christi Blut Vergebung suchen und finden und in der Kraft Christi die Wurzel der Geldgier aus dem Herzen reißen und der gottseligen Genügsamkeit nachstreben? (Lied 363, 7. 8. Luther XI, 1388 f.) W. E. G.

Outlines on the First Series of Gospel-Lessons Chosen by the Synodical Conference.

Seventh Sunday after Trinity.

MATT. 18, 15—22.

By nature man is selfish. He is not concerned about his neighbor's welfare. Let the other fellow see how he can get along. If he is on the wrong path, it is his "own hard luck." "Am I my brother's keeper?" Gen. 4, 9. These sentiments of Cain are the sentiments of natural man. — Not so the Christian. He knows that he has a duty to fulfil toward his fellow-man. The Christian desires the salvation of all men. He tries to rescue the sinner from hell; and he tries to keep his fellow-Christian on the path of life. Our text speaks to us on

OUR CHRISTIAN DUTY TOWARD AN OFFENDING BROTHER:

1. To reprove him, so that he may repent;
2. To forgive him when he repents;
3. To excommunicate him if he remains impenitent.

1.

a. "Tell him his fault." V. 15. Our flesh has various "excuses" for not doing so: the brother might take it amiss, the matter might be made worse, a waiting policy might be the better way, let others speak to him, etc. But Jesus says, "Tell him his fault."

b. "If he shall hear thee, thou hast *gained* thy brother." V. 15. To gain the brother, to bring him back to the right path, to save his soul: that should be the purpose of our remonstrance. Jas. 5, 19. 20. Not to take revenge, Rom. 12, 17. 19—21, not to humiliate the brother, Prov. 24, 17, not to exalt ourselves, 1 Cor. 10, 12, but the purpose should be to bring the erring brother to repentance, to reestablish a friendly relation among brethren, to keep peace in the Church of God. Not our own honor, but the honor of God; not any injury that

may have been inflicted upon us, but the welfare of the brother's soul: that should be uppermost in our mind.

c. In order to gain the brother, we must *deal gently, kindly, brotherly*, with him. He must be made to feel that ours is a good purpose. We should therefore not first of all publish his sin (if it is not yet generally known), not tell neighbors and friends nor the ungodly world, but we should speak to him privately, face to face, heart to heart. So says the Lord "*between thee and him alone.*" How often this is not done! Others are told, but the offender is not spoken to! How unkind, mean, cruel, unchristian! In this way the erring brother is not helped; when he hears what we have done, his anger is aroused. Eighth Commandment and its explanation. — But if the brother hear us not? Then see him again; be patient and long-suffering. And if your own efforts prove unsuccessful, *call in one or two Christian friends* in whom the brother has confidence to assist you. V. 16. Put his case before them; let them judge whether your judgment is right; let them use their good offices; they can, perhaps, apply Scripture to the case better than you could. Don't forget to pray! *Before calling in any one else, call in God on the case.* And remember His promise given in Vv. 19. 20. — But if the brother will not admit his guilt? Sad, indeed, but not hopeless. "*Tell it unto the church,*" v. 17, the Christian congregation, so that the entire church can assist, pray, plead, help to save the brother's soul. Much is at stake; a concerted effort is worth while.

Are we following these directions which the Lord gives us in our text?

2.

a. *God forgives penitent sinners.* Jesus is the Savior. He says: "Him that cometh to Me I will in no wise cast out." John 6, 37. Examples: David, Peter, the woman taken in the very act of adultery, the prodigal son.

b. *We should forgive.* Vv. 18b—20. Offenses against us cannot be compared, either as to their number or their nature, with the offenses which we commit against our God and Savior. If God forgives, we should forgive. Study the parable which follows the text. Vv. 23—35. — We easily and quickly grow tired of forgiving. We ask, *How often shall we, yes, must we forgive?* Peter asked that question. V. 21. The Lord answered him: As often as thy brother asks forgiveness; there is no limit. V. 22. — Thus God deals with us. He forgives us daily our many and great sins. In the same prayer in which He taught us daily to ask His forgiveness and promised to hear us He tells us to add these words to that prayer: "As we forgive those who trespass against us." How could we expect to be forgiven if we were unwilling to forgive? Mark 11, 25. 26; Matt. 5, 25. 26.

Are we always ready to forgive and forget? Do we always delight in the sinner's repentance? Or do we at times, like the "elder brother," murmur when a poor prodigal returns? Luke 15, 28. 32.

3.

a. In spite of all good, kind, and persistent efforts of loving brethren, *some sinners will remain impenitent*. They will neglect to hear even the church. V. 17. Not all men will be saved. Even many Christians will again turn away from the Lord and return to the ways of sin. John 6, 66; 1 John 2, 19.

b. Then we must perform a *sad duty*: "If he neglect to hear the church, let him be unto thee as an *heathen man and a publican*." V. 17. An impenitent man, a man living in sin, shall not be permitted to remain a member of a Christian congregation. So the Lord directs. Paul, therefore, took the Christian congregation at Corinth severely to task because it had not excommunicated a certain impenitent fornicator. 1 Cor. 5, 1. 2.

c. *For his own sake* an impenitent man should be excommunicated. 1 Cor. 5, 5. *For the sake of the Christians in the church* this should be done. 1 Cor. 5, 6. 7. 13. Also *for the sake of God's honor*. God tells us that "heathen men and publicans" shall not be permitted to remain in the Christian congregation. V. 17.

d. The Christian congregation, of course, is the only body which can excommunicate. When this has been done, let no sinner make light of such action; for Jesus says: "Verily I say unto you, Whatsoever ye shall bind on earth shall be bound in heaven." V. 18.

e. If, however, an excommunicated person repents, the church should forgive him and receive him again into membership. 2 Cor. 2, 7. 8.

May God keep us from sinning! If any one sin, let us admonish him that he repent. If any one needs must be admonished, let him gratefully accept brotherly admonition. Let us pray for one another that God may keep us on the way to life. And let us remember that where two or three are gathered together in the name of Jesus, there Jesus Himself is present with His grace and with His divine power. V. 20.

J. H. C. F.

Eighth Sunday after Trinity.

MATT. 7, 7—14.

The text contains material for several sermons, and the contents of these sermons would vary, depending upon what part of the text we should take up for consideration. In v. 12 we have the summary of the Law, and the Sermon on the Mount is Christ's explanation of the spiritual meaning of the Law. In vv. 13 and 14 we have an earnest admonition to seek salvation and to avoid the way leading to destruc-

tion. Very important matter! The greater portion of our text, however, treats of prayer, which is a most essential thing in the life of a Christian.

WHAT SHOULD INDUCE A CHRISTIAN TO PRAY?

1. *God's command;*

2. *God's promise.*

1.

God's command is very clear and oft repeated. "Ask," "seek," "knock." Second Commandment. Ps. 27, 8: "Seek ye My face." Ps. 50, 15; 1 Thess. 5, 17; Matt. 5, 44. Prayer is worship which we owe God — the Father, the Savior, the Sanctifier. Children should honor their parents by saying "please," and so we should honor God by praying.

God does not ask our prayers because He is in need of our worship, because we poor mortals could add to His glory and magnify His honor. God is self-sufficient. If all the angels were mute or did not exist, God would nevertheless be the Greatest, the Holiest, the Wisest.

Nor does God command prayer because He needs information concerning our needs. Mrs. Eddy teaches her devotees: "The habit of pleading with a divine Mind as one pleads with a human being perpetuates the belief in God as humanly circumscribed, — an error which impedes spiritual growth." "How empty are our conceptions of Deity! We admit theoretically that God is good, omnipotent, omnipresent, infinite, and then we try to give information to this infinite Mind: to plead for unmerited pardon and liberal outpouring of benefactions." "To suppose that God forgives or punishes sin, according as His mercy is sought or unsought, is to misunderstand love and make prayer the safety-valve for wrong-doing." "God is not influenced by man. The 'divine ear' is not an auditorial nerve. It is the all-hearing and all-knowing Mind, to whom each want of man is always known, and by whom it will be supplied." These words are hell-breathed. The prayer of the publican, according to Mrs. Eddy, was an "error," "an empty conception," "a safety-valve for wrong-doing." The Fifth Petition superfluous? True, God needs not be informed, as a human father must be told the needs and wants of the members of his family; but it is necessary for us to know that we are dependent upon His help. God does not need us, but we need Him. Our prayer proves our obedience to His command, and that we know and acknowledge Him to be the Giver of all good gifts.

Jesus exhorts us to prayer in the text. He is our Savior and Mediator. "In His name," John 16, 23, we should pray, and only through Him can we come to the Father, John 14, 6. Prayer is an expression of our faith, and our faith is based upon God's Word. Thus we come boldly and confidently. God has entered into fellowship with us through His grace, which is offered and extended to us in the

means of grace, and so we can approach Him as our Friend and Father. If we fail to come as believing Christians, we cannot be heard. All lodge-prayers are worthless because they are Christless. They are rank idolatry.

Prayers should not be uttered in a mercenary spirit, as if we were able to merit God's benefactions by means of our prayers, as if we could earn all the more, the longer our prayers are and the oftener they are repeated. Remember — "by grace." The Savior says: "Ask," not, "Demand." We should come as beggars, not as creditors. The very spirit of prayer is a gift of God.

We are obeying the command of God even though our prayers may be uttered in simple and plain words. Prayer's excellence does not consist in a multitude of words. The pleas of the Syrophenician woman were very simple. "Ask." Ask like a child.

Our prayers should be serious and persevering. Not only "ask," but also "seek" and "knock." Prayers that are a mere matter of form, recited at stated intervals, uttered as a sort of salve for the conscience, are not commanded. Sins against the Second Commandment. Sham! God commands prayers arising from the needs that move our heart. Prayers should be the outcries of our soul. Spurgeon: "Prayer pulls the rope below, and the great bell rings above in the ears of God. Some scarcely stir the bell, for they pray so languidly; others give but an occasional pluck at the rope; but he who wins with Heaven is the man who grasps the rope boldly and pulls continuously, with all his might."

The command to pray heartens us to come before God with our petitions, because believing the command, we can but trust that He will hear us. But God expressly adds the promise.

2.

God's promises are more prominent in Scriptures than His command. Vv. 7, 8. Ps. 10, 17; Matt. 6, 6; 21, 22; John 16, 23, etc. The Savior makes the promises sure by comparison. Vv. 9—11. (Luke 11, 12 f.) We are "evil," Matt. 15, 19; Rom. 3, 4; 7, 18; we must pray, "Deliver us from evil"; by nature we are on the broad way, that leadeth to destruction; and still we "know how to give good gifts." Bengel: "'Know,' *i. e.*, ye know to distinguish bread from stones. It is a wonder (*Wunder*) that we still possess so much reason, so evil are we. Job 39, 17, compared with v. 13 ff." Much more will God "give good gifts." God takes pleasure in giving, blessing, and doing good.

These promises of God are necessary because of our frailty and ignorance. We do not see the invisible God whom we address in prayer, and so God approaches us in His promises; and He gives us tangible proof of His presence by answering prayers. If God would not answer our prayers, He would deceive us; and indeed He

would stoop to playing pranks. God's promises we are to believe, although it seems almost unbelievable that the sovereign God should condescend to comply with the wishes of poor mortals. But these unbelievable promises should be self-evident truths to us, all the more since we are God's children, reconciled by the blood of Christ, who gives us these promises in the text.

God's promises are not a bribe by which He would make us more willing to offer up the tribute of worship, to do what we owe Him, — for God does not need us, — but they merely prove God's good will toward us, and He "would thereby tenderly invite us to ask Him," etc.

God's promises include "good things" in general, temporal, spiritual, heavenly gifts. Jas. 1, 17. What a storehouse from which we can draw supplies! "Our prayers are ships. We send them to no uncertain port. They are destined for the Throne of Grace; and while they take a cargo of supplications from us, God answers by sending back His argosies laden with the riches of divine grace." "Prayer moves the hand which moves the world."

Spiritual gifts promised expressly. Luke 11, 13. We need the Holy Spirit, faith, forgiveness of sins, the comfort of God's Word, strength in temptations, protection from the devil, etc. We shall surely receive them because necessary for our salvation.

"Good things" of the text refers also to temporal things. Israel in the wilderness received manna from heaven and water out of the rock, also other relief in bodily distress. Abraham's servant Eliezer and Hagar received an answer to their prayers for earthly gifts. Jesus fed five thousand. *Our* prayer for daily bread is answered by God. But God would never give us a stone for bread. We are so blind that we at times ask for things that would be harmful to us, just as our little children often ask for things which they ought not to have. They may pout and cry, but still we withhold from them whatever would harm them, either their bodies or their souls. God treats us the same way. "Good things" implies that He will give only those temporal things to us which are good for us. In His wisdom He knows better than we what benefits or harms us. We ought to desire to have only what God desires to give us. "Thy will be done."

Being Christians, we should pray. Prayer is the pulse of our soul. God gives us the best and sweetest flowers of His love and mercy when we are upon our knees. Chrysostom: "Consider how august a privilege it is when angels are present and archangels throng around, when cherubim and seraphim encircle with their blaze the throne, that a mortal may approach with unrestrained confidence and converse with heaven's dread Sovereign! Oh, what honor was ever conferred like this?"

Cease not to pray;
On Jesus as your all rely.
Would you live happy, happy die,
Take time to pray.

O. C. A. B.

Ninth Sunday after Trinity.

MARK 12, 38—44.

Christ offered Himself without spot to God for us. Heb. 9, 14, 28; 10, 10. Do we bring our offerings to God as we ought?

OFFERINGS THAT PEOPLE BRING THEIR GOD:—

1. Offerings that the praying scribes bring;
2. Offerings that the many rich bring;
3. Offerings that the poor widow brings.

1.

The scribes. Originally the occupation of a scribe was copying the Old Testament Scriptures. Ezra 7, 6, 10. They were also the professional interpreters of the law in civil and religious matters. Furthermore, they were the authentic teachers of the people. As scribes they were supposed to be well indoctrinated and to know God's Word and His will. — Advantages of having a thorough indoctrination. Such are stewards of a rich gift of God.

These men, according to their custom, *came into the presence of God regularly with a special offering*: prayers, long prayers. — Praying, worshiping God, certainly is not wrong. God's command. Example of Christ. It is a mark of degeneracy if people refuse their God, the Source of all their blessings, the sacrifices of their heart and mouth. Private prayers. The family altar. Public worship.

Yet *Christ condemns the praying scribes*. V. 40. *Why? Because of their insane vanity*. Vv. 38, 39. The particular style of garment spoken of in the text was worn by kings, priests, and persons of rank. Jonah 3, 6. "Salutations in the market-places," especially when they were exchanged with men of station, were rather spectacular and elaborate social functions. The "seats" and "rooms" referred to were coveted marks of honor and distinction. — To dress according to our station in life, to enjoy the greetings and the good will of our friends, to assemble at social gatherings, to give honor to whom honor is due, and to receive honor ourselves, is all according to the will of God. But pride and vanity in the heart poisons all. Especially to come into the presence of God, into His sanctuaries and to His altar and for His service, with a vain and proud heart is doubly abhorring to the holy God. "God resisteth the proud."

The praying scribes were condemned so severely also *because their long prayers were a pretense, a blind, a cloak*. V. 40. The same Greek word is employed in Luke 20, 47; Acts 27, 30; Phil. 1, 18; 1 Thess. 2, 4, 5. Greed, avarice, dishonesty, downright hypocrisy, characterizes these religionists. They dishonestly appropriate the property of widows and orphans and cover their rascality with the cloak of long prayers and outward sanctity. — Are we sincere? Are there dishonest, ill-gotten dollars in our bank accounts or in our

investments? Do we continue in the temple with singleness of heart? Acts 2, 46. Do we come before God just and devout? Luke 2, 25. Do we bring the offerings of our hearts in the spirit of Cornelius? Acts 10, 2.

2.

There was a Temple treasury. V. 41. The people of God were not only enjoined to worship at the Temple, but they were told not to appear before their God empty-handed. Tithes. Deut. 12, 5. 6. 11; 2 Chron. 31, 4—11; Mal. 3, 7ff. There are such treasuries to-day, and God exhorts His Christians to fill them.

"And Jesus sat over against the treasury." V. 41a. Remarkable conduct! He sat down there for the express purpose of seeing *how* the people cast in their offerings, how much, how little, whether cheerfully or reluctantly, whether with a groan or with a thankful heart. Perhaps it would be a revelation to some of us if we could observe the unseen Guest at our treasury on Sunday mornings. His observing eyes notice more than we surmise — the purpose, the hand, the gift itself, the heart!

"And many that were rich cast in much." V. 41b. It is not a crime to be rich. Abraham, Gen. 24, 34 f.; Job, Job 1, 1—3. Neither did these rich men make a mistake in casting in much. God Himself is a large, bountiful Giver. He covers His immense skies with mountains of clouds and colors them crimson with the rays of the setting sun to gratify our eye. He strews immense spheres on the vaults of a boundless firmament to thrill our soul in the darkness; and as He commands them to walk in their paths, He bids us count them. Does your tongue languish from thirst? He places rivers of water at your feet. Have you made yourself and others miserable with your sins? Do they abound with all their hideous consequences? God sacrifices His only Son, nailing Him to the accursed cross as your Substitute, your Savior, that, where sin abounds, grace might much more abound. St. Paul extols the "riches of His grace." God is indeed a rich Giver. May He not expect His pardoned children, prompted by gratitude, to bring large sacrifices, so that the need and the suffering on this earth may be alleviated, and that His saving Gospel may be spread to save poor sinners? His word to the rich — and that includes most of us — is: "Charge them that are rich," etc., 1 Tim. 6, 7.

"And He called unto Him His disciples . . . abundance." Vv. 43a. 44a. The observing eyes of Jesus judge according to the proportionate amount of the gift and according to the ability of the giver. God speaks of real, honest-to-goodness sacrifices and looks at the motive which prompted the gift. What these particular men brought were not really sacrifices. In comparison with what they still had and with what they spent on purple and fine linens, for their comfort and for luxuries, for their stately homes and fair villas in

the mountains of Galilee, they really gave very little. Besides, if a gift is made with a self-righteous heart, or to arouse the applause of God and man, then it is an abomination in the sight of God.

3.

But—hush!—there comes a lone woman. *The poor widow.* Her appearance, clothing, bearing, is quite in contrast to the long-robed scribes and the purple-gowned rich. “What will *she* give?” V. 42. The contributions of those who are really poor.

Jesus appraises her offering. V. 43. The poor widow leaves the holy Temple precincts. Judas, who at another time expressed his indignation at the waste of the precious ointment which Mary brought to anoint her Lord, evidently was of the mind that this poor widow might have kept at least one of the two mites to buy her child a crust of bread. Jesus, however, commends her. His commendation is written in the Sacred Volume and will be read till the end of time. His assurance and her confidence were that He who feeds the sparrows would provide for her.—For several reasons many might not wish that Jesus should say anything about their offerings and contributions. But He does. The records will be opened. He will reward us openly. Matt. 6, 4; 2 Cor. 9, 6ff.; Gal. 6, 6.

When we come before God with the offerings of our heart, lips, and hands, let us take heed *how* we come.

Cleveland, O.

H. W. BARTELS.

Tenth Sunday after Trinity.

MATT. 21, 33—46.

God deals with the individual. Cf. preceding parable.—“The Lord is not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance.” 2 Pet. 3, 9; 1 Tim. 2, 4. The Law, each commandment, addressed to each and every man. God says to the individual: Thou shalt; thou shalt not. Each transgressor is accursed, Deut. 27, esp. v. 26; Gal. 3, 10. The Gospel is to be preached to every creature. Mark 16. Jesus dealt with individuals: Nicodemus, Zacchaeus, Thomas, Mary.—“He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned.” At the final Judgment the Son of Man will dispense justice to each person. Cf. Matt. 25, 31—46; 2 Cor. 5, 10; Eph. 6, 8; Rev. 22, 12; 20, 11—15.

God deals with communities: nations, churches. Cf. v. 43. Division and distinction of peoples, beginning of nations, wrought by God, Gen. 11, 6—9. God fixed their boundaries. Acts 17, 26; Deut. 32, 8. God governs and rules the nations. He destroys wicked cities, tribes, nations; apostate churches. Sodom; tribes of Canaan; empires of old. Cf. Jer. 1, 5, 10; Is. 13—23. Israel a notable example and warning. God’s grace and Israel. Cf. v. 43. The Jews rejected

the kingdom of God, the Church of Christ; it was taken from them; the nation was destroyed. A lesson for all nations, especially the so-called Christian nations, to-day; also for church-bodies.

ISRAEL'S REBELLION AGAINST THE LORD.

1. *How Israel rebelled against the Lord;*
2. *How the Lord punished Israel.*

1.

A. How graciously the Lord dealt with Israel.

a. How good He was. Vv. 33. The householder is God. The vineyard is Israel. Cf. Is. 5; Jer. 2, 21; Ps. 80, 8—15; John 15, 1—8. God planted, established, Israel, made it His chosen people. He planted it "in a very fruitful hill," Is. 5, 1, Canaan, rich and fertile. He made it "a noble vine, wholly a right seed," Jer. 2, 21, by His grace. He "hedged it." How? Physically and politically, spiritually. Position: Lebanon on the north; Jordan and desert on the east; desert on the south; the Great Sea on the west. He made it a theocracy, separated from other nations by the Law, moral, ceremonial, civil. The Law the "middle wall of partition." Circumcision. Etc.—He "dugged a wine-press in it." "Wine-press, or fat, or vat, a stone trough cut out of solid rock or deposited in ground to receive the expressed juice of the grapes. (What? Some say: the Temple; others have different opinions. Not to be pressed!) Idea: *Everything necessary was done.*—He "built a tower." Towers to guard against robbers. (What? The Temple? or the prophets? Not to be pressed! Ezek. 33, 7; 3, 16—21.) *God's goodness.* Cf. Is. 5, 4.

b. How patiently the Lord waited for fruit. Vv. 33—37.—"He went into a far country." He withdrew His immediate direction, as in the pillar of cloud and fire, on Mount Sinai—miracles. He ruled through His Word and ordinances. All the time He expected fruit. Rent paid in money or kind. Fruit? Faith and obedience: of the heart, lips, hands; faith, hope, love, purity; prayer, praise, edifying speech; works of faith and charity. Cf. John 15; 2 Pet. 1, 5—8, Etc.—"When the time of the fruit drew near." Fruit in season. Time for growth and maturity. God waits. Cf. Ps. 1, 3. Crises in history of Israel: Samuel; Elijah; time of great prophets; John the Baptist and Jesus. He came again and again. Even after they had killed His servants, the prophets, He bore with them, was merciful. Yea, He sent His only, beloved Son to receive the fruit. Jesus dealt kindly with them, granted them time to repent. His patience, mercy, was infinite, divine. He did all that could be done.

B. How Israel rebelled against the Lord.

a. It refused the fruit. It was bound to yield it; it obligated itself to serve the Lord and bear the fruits of faith. But it failed to do so. The Israelites served idols, violated the Lord's command-

ments and ordinances. They were a faithless, wicked nation. God's admonitions and warnings and chastisements they ignored, defied.

b. Israel maltreated God's servants. It rebelled against God under Samuel, demanding a king. Cf. 1 Sam. 8, 1—9. 19—22. These kings, for the most part, were wicked, especially in the Northern Kingdom. They turned the nation against the Lord. God sent the earlier prophets up to the time of the Assyrian captivity. (End of Kingdom of Israel.) He sent the "other servants, more than the first," to the remaining two tribes. Greater, more in number, ending with John the Baptist. Some they beat, like Jeremiah; some they stoned, *e. g.*, Zechariah. Cf. 2 Chron. 36, 16; Neh. 9, 26; Jer. 25, 3—7; Heb. 11, 36. 37. Some they killed, like Isaiah and John. And the present rulers were the descendants of these murderers. Cf. Matt. 5, 12; 23, 29—37; Acts 7, 52; 1 Thess 2, 15. What wickedness, rebellion!

c. Israel murdered the Heir, the Lord Himself. God said: V. 37; Mark 12, 6. The Son of God; Son of David, Heir. Cf. 3, 17; John 3, 35; Heb. 1, 1. 2. But the Jews conspired against Him, plotted to seize His inheritance. They purposed to have control indefinitely. So they caught the Heir, Jesus, and "cast Him out of the vineyard." They "filled up the measure of their iniquity." Israel finally rejected the Lord.

Application.—History repeats itself. Cf. the churches of Asia Minor, of Northern Africa, of the East; later, the Church of Rome; now, in part, the state churches of France, Russia, Germany, England; whole denominations here in the United States.—What did God leave undone? The Kingdom was brought to them by the Gospel. They had it. But they rejected it. In the East and in Rome they persecuted, burned, killed the servants of God. Lately in Russia. Here and in Europe they ridicule and slander faithful pastors. And their purpose? To control the Church. They are in rebellion against the Lord and His Word. Cf. Ps. 2. They will have nothing to do with the Christ of God.

2.

A. Christ made them acknowledge and confess their guilt. Vv. 40. 41. 45. 46. "They perceived that He spake of them." They saw the drift and intent of the parables. Unwittingly, perhaps, they condemned themselves. But they hardened their hearts. Only fear of the people kept them from seizing Him on the spot. They justified the terrible judgment of Jesus. Cf. Is. 5, 3; Rom. 3, 17—29.—Rebels to-day have a bad conscience, a foreboding of the impending punishment.

B. He deprives them of their great privilege. Vv. 41. 43b. They scheme and plot to retain authority. But they shall lose all. The Kingdom will be taken from them. They will be excluded from all

inheritance. The Spirit of God will be taken away. The Gospel will be preached to other nations, to the Gentiles; the Kingdom will be transferred to them.—Literally fulfilled. The Church of Christ was transferred to Gentile nations. It has been definitely taken from Israel as a nation. The Jews are no longer the chosen people of God. By its rebellion Israel has lost its favored relation and its privileges.—The same thing has happened in Christendom. From Asia Minor to Western Europe; thence to Northern Europe; thence to America. We, too, shall lose it if we do not repent.

C. He delivers them to certain destruction. Vv. 41—44. They foretell their own doom. They are evil; and a great evil will destroy them. Their punishment long foretold. Christ quotes the ancient prophecy. Ps. 118, 22, 23; Is. 28, 16; 8, 14, 15. Their rebellion is doomed to failure. God chose and laid the Corner-stone; the structure will be built and will stand.—Whoever falls on this Stone, stumbles, is offended, shall be broken. Jesus, in His humiliation, is the Christ, the Son of God. Let no one take offense! This Stone, in falling on any one, will grind him to powder, scatter him as dust. Is. 60, 12; Dan. 2, 44. Fulfilment: The Jewish nation was broken, is a desolation. Where are the Christian churches of Asia Minor to-day? the many churches of Southern Europe? of Northern Europe? How many of those who set out to fight and destroy Christ's kingdom have been broken to pieces! Finally the Heir will come in the clouds of heaven to judge all rebellious nations and individuals. Complete, eternal ruin, awful, everlasting punishment in hell, awaits all rebels.

What a lesson — warning! Foretold — fulfilled. Rulers, leaders, ruin the State, the Church, themselves. But the people are not blameless. They share the guilt by not protesting and not refusing to follow their wicked leaders. Jesus is the Lord. In Him we must believe; Him we must obey. Then we, too, shall see and say: Ps. 118, 22—29. Amen.

Eleventh Sunday after Trinity.

MARK 2, 13—17.

No one has suffered more from misunderstandings than the Lord Jesus. Even to-day no one is more misunderstood than He. In spite of His many declarations of intention and purpose and the innumerable demonstrations of His powers, His purpose, work, and method are understood by comparatively few people. Even where the Bible is within the reach of all, Jesus is understood by only a few. The devil is interested in keeping a caricature of Jesus before the eyes of men.—Here there is danger also for us Christians. It is therefore necessary to go back to the words of Jesus Himself, both that

we ourselves may *learn* again what His intentions are with us, and that we may *teach others*. In our text Jesus tells all the world very plainly and forcibly just for whom and why He came into this world.

JESUS' PURPOSE IN COMING INTO THIS WORLD.

He came,

1. *Not for the strong and righteous, but*
2. *To help the weak and sinful.*

1.

A. Our text tells us that Jesus called Levi, the son of Alphaeus, a publican, to Himself, and that this disreputable, unpatriotic, sinful man followed Jesus. This man also invited Jesus to dinner, and at this dinner there gathered all manner of publicans and sinners. When the scribes and Pharisees, who considered themselves good patriotic Jews, faithful and loyal to the religion of the fathers, saw all this, they murmured and criticized Jesus and uttered their displeasure by saying to His disciples: "How is it that He eateth and drinketh with publicans and sinners?" In answer to this criticism Jesus said: "They that are whole have no need of the physician, but they that are sick. I came not to call the righteous, but sinners, to repentance." In these words Jesus tells us exactly for whom He came into this world. He makes it clear, first of all, that He came not for the righteous, good, wise, and strong.

a. According to this all those are wrong who imagine that Jesus came into this world simply to provide good men with more and better food and drink. In the days of Jesus the Sadducees considered themselves very good people. Their aim was the full satisfaction of all their physical desires. The best of eating and drinking, and plenty of it, the best of clothing, and no end of variety of it, the best of living, riches, honor among men, self-indulgence, having a good time, independence, reveling, feasting, debauchery, and all that goes with it, — this they considered the very end and purpose of their existence. And many of the common people shared these sentiments. "Bread and fish" in abundance, an easy, lazy life, and the cure of their physical ills, that was the height of their ambition. And all these considered themselves very good people. They looked with contempt upon publicans and sinners and prostitutes. These disreputable people should be punished, but as for themselves, they ought to have comforts in abundance. They thought that Jesus came to supply these, and they were disappointed when they saw Him in the company of the outcasts.

b. It is so to-day. Many believe that Jesus should punish the bad people and help the good people get a plentiful and good living. In our text Jesus makes it very plain that this is not His purpose. Jesus did not come to produce social conditions which will give

abundance of earthly means and a good living to the respectable. The "good" people who imagine that they need nothing beyond more food, honor, health, and bodily comfort do not understand Jesus. Jesus did not come to help them to attain these.

B. a. Again, there were those who believed that Jesus came to teach man wisdom, a philosophy. They did not believe that man is sinful and in need of redemption; they imagined that man needs no more than wise theories, advice, a philosophy, and instruction in morality. These people gave the apostles so much trouble by teaching a "voluntary humility and worshiping of angels and having a show of wisdom in will worship and humility and neglecting of the body; not in any honor to the satisfying of the flesh." Col. 2, 18. 23.

b. To-day these are known by a number of names, chief among which is "Christian Scientists." These people teach that they have discovered the real secret of Jesus, and that all ills of man, social, business, and physical, can be healed and cured if he will but *believe* himself sinless and good and righteous. But look closely, and you will recognize in them the Pharisees and the hypocrites. They pretend to despise material things, physical remedies, physical means, etc.; but, after all, they so often fail to think themselves out of their troubles and pains that we find them taking their refuge to the very material things which they pretend to despise. They are after material money, gold and silver, just as much as others, if not more so. Pretending to despise the means of health, they are the ones who are continually talking about health and the means of obtaining it. Nevertheless they have misled many thousands who have perished miserably. No, Jesus did not come to teach us to gain happiness by practising self-righteousness and hypocrisy.

The utter falsity of all such teaching as would lead men to believe in their own powers, wisdom, and goodness Jesus lays bare when He says: v. 17. — Let us examine ourselves whether carnal and self-righteous thoughts have entered our hearts.

2.

a. For whom, then, did Jesus come? His own words tell us this definitely: v. 17. He came for sinners, He came for those poor souls who have transgressed God's commandments, and who are perishing through their sins. You may divide these people into two classes. First, those who are disgraced before the world, who are outcasts of society, whom no one would receive. Some of these are even now in prisons and asylums. Secondly, those sinners who are in good repute, who have been preserved from disgraceful acts, or whose sins are not known to their fellow-men. They have never been inside of a prison; they are highly esteemed among their fellow-men; they are praised for their good works. But before God these are just as

sinful as the former. Through their sins they may be enriching themselves and ruining others; they may be building up for themselves their own houses, their own influence and prestige. But be not deceived! Their misfortunes and sorrows are on the way.—However, to whatever class this one or that one may belong, all men are sinners, and none are worse than those who think that they have no sin; for these are simply deceiving themselves. 1 John 1, 8.—For these sinners Jesus came. There is no one so vile that Jesus did not come for him; there is no one so good that Jesus did not need to come for him. Rom. 3, 9—12. 22. 23. Our papers report to us that there are some very wicked persons on this earth, and looking about, we may get the impression that some of these sinners are certainly beyond all help. Notwithstanding this, Jesus here includes them all when He says: “I came to call sinners to repentance.” Jesus came for every sinful man, woman, and child on this earth, no one excluded. In order to make sure of this, the Bible itself reports that He called some of the very vilest people to Himself: Levi, the publican, the malefactor on the cross, Saul, the persecutor of Christians, Mary Magdalene, and many others. Quote also Eph. 2, 3.

b. Was it His purpose, then, to encourage these sinners to continue to lead a life of sin? There are those who seek the company of the wicked in order to wallow with them in the mire. The Pharisees accused Jesus of doing this. Slander and blasphemy! No, Jesus came to deliver the foolish, weak, and sinful from their misery and their damnation. Nothing is worse than sin and its curse. It certainly leads to ruin here and hereafter.—Jesus calls to *repentance*. Repentance not mere outward reformation of a few vices, but an inward sight of the horror of unbelief and sin, a crushing of pride and desperate wickedness, a turning to the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world. The heart cries, “God, be merciful to me, a sinner!” and, “Oh, wretched man that I am!” If Jesus is to help you, you must repent and seek cleansing as David sought it: “Wash me thoroughly from mine iniquity,” etc. Ps. 51.

Jesus’ message to all sinful ones is therefore not this: “Do not worry about your sins, do not be alarmed and troubled about your transgressions; others are as bad as you and even worse.” There have been, and there are to-day, many sinful, depraved characters who have spoken thus and taught that Jesus had come into the world to teach this. But that is a great mistake. Jesus did not come to put the sinner at his ease while living in his sin. He tells us expressly that He came to *call sinners to repentance*.

Application: Sinner (and you are all sinners), look to Jesus, who died for your sins. Whether for the first time or for the thousandth time, look to Jesus, who came to save you. His blood cleanseth you from all sin. “Just as I am, without one plea,” etc.

S.

Kurze Anweisung, wie man eine gute Predigt macht.

Konferenzarbeit von R. Piehler.

„Es ist kein Ding, das die Leute mehr bei der Kirche behält denn die gute Predigt“, so steht in der Apologie und als Motto auf dem Titelblatt unsers „Homiletischen Magazins“ zu lesen. Wie wahr ist doch dieses Wort! Wie beherzigenswert für uns Prediger, deren Lebensaufgabe und Beruf es ist, gut zu predigen. In wenigstens neunzig aus hundert Fällen ist die Predigt der Prediger an der leeren Kirche schuld. Ist es ein Wunder, daß die Leute der Kirche fernbleiben, wenn sie mit Stroh, mit Gewäsch, mit eflen Substituten, mit Gift abgespeist werden, mit Sachen, die weder dem Ohr noch dem Verstand, am allerwenigsten aber dem Herzen zusagen? Wären nicht die Prediger die ersten, die wegbleiben würden, wenn sie dazu verurteilt wären, die Hörer ihrer eigenen Predigten zu sein? Es ist normal, daß in unserm Lande über the failure of the Church, the preacher, and the sermon geklagt wird. Laien in den Kirchen klagen bitterlich, daß ihnen Zeug vorgelesen wird, das ebensowenig unter den Begriff Predigt kommt wie Mist unter den der Nahrungsmittel. Es kommt jeden normalen Menschen Abscheu an, wenn man die ausposaunten „topics“ solcher Schänder des heiligen Berufes in den Tageszeitungen liest. Es ist natürlich, daß denkende Menschen diese Schwafel- und Lasterhallen meiden und sich nicht die Hosen und Kleider durchrutschen wollen, um diese Strafe über sich ergehen zu lassen. Gott sei Dank, in unserer Synode steht es noch so, daß man, was Inhalt anlangt, noch gute Predigten hört! Gottes Wort wird verkündigt, nicht eigene Gedanken, noch viel weniger Tagesflatsch!

Aber zur guten Predigt rechnen wir nicht nur den Inhalt, sondern auch die Form, die Art und Weise, die schmackhafte Zubereitung, das Auftragen und Servieren der Seelenspeise. Gewiß, ein Haufen grobgehackten Brotes und roher Stücke Fleisch, zusammengestampfte ungeschälte Kartoffeln, Kraut und Rüben in einem Topf nährt gewiß besser als ein zierlich garnierter Teller mit nichts darauf; aber Appetit reizend, Eßlust erregend, wieder in dieselbe Speisehalle lockend ist es gewiß nicht. Nur im größten Hunger schlingt man das hinunter. Eine gute Predigt ist der vortrefflichste Inhalt: Gottes Wort, gut durchgekocht, fein gewürzt, fein geordnet und so serviert, daß es nach immer „mehr“ schmeckt. Mit dem Essen muß schon der Appetit nach der nächsten Predigt kommen, so daß den Leuten das Wasser im geistlichen Munde zusammenläuft. Dazu hat uns Gott, der Veranstalter des großen Abendmahls, zu Küchenkünstlern und Kellermeistern ausbilden lassen und uns angestellt, den geladenen Gästen einen rechten Genuß zu bereiten. Wir sagen noch einmal: Der Inhalt, das Wort, sättigt; aber es ist gotteslästerlich, das herrliche, köstliche

Gotteswort durch Faulheit, Leichtfertigkeit in der Zubereitung den Gästen zu verfehlen und sie von Gottes Tisch wegzutreiben. —

Allerdings, eine gute Predigt kann niemand aus eigener Vernunft und Kraft und Kunstfertigkeit zustande bringen. Jede gute Predigt, die ein Prediger darbietet, ist ein Gnadengeschenk und eine Gabe Gottes. Gott verleiht diese Gabe nicht jedem Christen und zeigt damit an, daß er nicht jeden Christen und Gelehrten als Prediger gebrauchen will. Melancthon sagte: „Predigen ist keine Kunst; wenn's eine wäre, so wollte ich sie auch wohl lernen.“ Ebenso wahr ist es aber auch, daß viele, denen Gott diese Gnadengabe gegeben hat, sie aus verdammlicher Faulheit oder Interesse an andern Dingen vernachlässigen oder doch die Übung, die Weiterbildung, unterlassen. So kommen sie dahin, daß sie die Gabe verlieren und zuletzt keine gute Predigt mehr machen können. Sehen wir uns wohl vor!

So ist es denn recht und billig, daß wir Pastoren uns immer wieder, ja täglich mit der Frage beschäftigen: Wie kommt eine gute Predigt zustande? Die Predigt muß unser Hauptgeschäft sein; denn Christus faßt unser ganzes Amt in den kurzen Auftrag: „Predigt das Evangelium!“ Wie nun rechte Handwerker und Künstler eifrig fortstudieren, um immer tüchtiger und geschickter in ihrem Fach zu werden, so müssen wir Prediger vor allen andern die Kunst studieren, eine wirklich gute Predigt zu machen, und je älter wir im Amte werden, desto besser müssen unsere Predigten werden. Das kann aber nur durch anhaltendes Studium erzielt werden. Geht es nicht vorwärts, so haben wir den Krebsgang schon angetreten. O weh!

Darum wollen wir uns jetzt mit der so wichtigen Frage beschäftigen: Wie macht man eine gute Predigt? Und ich Unglückswurm, der seine Untüchtigkeit und Ungeschicktheit so oft tief beklagt und sich seiner Machwerke fast jedesmal schämt, soll dazu die Anweisung geben! Nur in Erinnerung bringen kann ich, was wir alle in mehrjährigem eingehenden Homiletikunterricht gelernt haben und hoffentlich stets üben. Beginnen wir denn im Namen des einzig rechten Homiletiklehrers, des Heiligen Geistes.

1.

Wodurch wird man ein guter Prediger? Genau durch dieselben Stücke, die einen rechten theologus machen. Luthers Anweisung ist: Oratio, meditatio, tentatio faciunt theologum. Wenn eins dieser drei Stücke einem Prediger fehlt oder gar alle drei, dann kann keine gute Predigt zustande kommen.

a. Also erstens Gebet. Alle großen Prediger haben Gott ihre Predigten auf den Knien abgerungen. Im heißen Gebet haben sie die Predigt in ihr Herz hineingesleht. Wir sind ja nicht tüchtig, etwas Gutes zu denken von uns selber, sondern wenn wir tüchtig sind, so ist das von Gott. Ohne Jesum können wir ja nichts tun, sind dürr wie

eine Rebe ohne Weinstock. Wir können ja Jesum nicht unsern Herrn heißen, nicht predigen, ohne den Heiligen Geist. Das Gebet ist der Kanal, durch den wir Gottes Gaben erlangen. Wir sind oft so dürr wie ein ausgebrannter Stein. Wir sitzen und studieren, aber kein Wort kommt in die Feder. Laßt uns beten, Brüder, täglich, die ganze Woche hindurch, daß Gott sein Wort uns in den Mund und ins Herz geben wolle, ja selbst die Predigt in uns mache; denn nur er kann sein Wort verkünden; nur er kann uns geben, was heilsam ist; nur er weiß und hat, was unserer Gemeinde und dem einzelnen fehlt und nötig ist. Beten wir ohne Unterlaß, dann werden wir imstande sein, gute, heilsame Predigten zu halten, je nach dem Maß des gläubigen, inbrünstigen Gebetes. Wer nicht betet, wird nie eine wirklich gute Predigt halten können. Bete und arbeite! Erst betet! Das ist die erste homiletische Regel, und von der darf keine Ausnahme gemacht werden. Wer hier fehlt, der hat es mit seiner Predigt von vornherein verfehlt.

b. Auf's Gebet muß zweitens die Meditation folgen. Es hieße Gott versuchen, wollten wir nur beten und es darauf ankommen lassen, daß der Heilige Geist unsere Faulheit stärke und uns die Predigt auf der Kanzel gäbe. Wir sind Arbeiter im Weinberg. Nicht im Schlaf, sondern in ernstster Arbeit will uns Gott das Erbetene geben. Ohne Meditation wird uns der Heilige Geist nur auf der Kanzel sagen, wie Klaus Harms erzählt: „Klaus, Klaus, du bist faul gewesen!“ Meditation ist: nachdenken, forschen, reiben, treiben die Worte des Textes. Darum sind uns allen, so hoffe ich, extemporierte Predigten ein Greuel. Sie können im besten Fall, wenn es kein Notfall ist, nur ein frommes Gewäsch sein. Wir verstehen aber darunter meistens nur die ungeschriebenen Predigten. Solche Extemporierbrüder ermahnen wir ernstlich, wenn sie uns als solche offenbar werden. Aber es gibt, glaube ich, viel mehr geschriebene extemporierte Predigten als ungeschriebene. Es kann ungeschriebene gute Predigten geben und sehr viele sehr schlechte, geschrieben extemporierte, aus dem weiten Chorrockärmel geschüttelte. Wenn sich ein Prediger, wie das vielfach geschieht, ohne vorherige ernste Meditation hinsetzt und drauflos schreibt, was ihm gerade in die Feder oder Schreibmaschine kommt, so tut er nichts anderes als schreibend extemporieren im schlechten Sinne dieses Wortes. Daß daraus ebensowenig Gutes kommt, als wenn einer redend extemporiert, ist wohl uns allen klar. Wenn einer noch so sehr rühmt, alle seine Predigten geschrieben zu haben, so ist damit nichts gewonnen, wenn er damit nicht sagen will, daß er seine Predigten nur nach eingehender, sorgfältiger Meditation verfaßt habe. Ohne Meditation kann keine gute Predigt zustande kommen. Es kann nur eine dünne Wassersuppe werden. Fang nicht am Samstag erst mit der Predigt an, sondern folge dem Rat treuer, großer Prediger; fang mit der nächsten Predigt an, wenn du Amen auf die eben beendete gesagt hast, das heißt, während der ganzen Woche beschäftige dich mit dem Text des folgenden Sonntags.

Erwäge den Text immer in deinem Geiste. Bewege das Wort, wie Maria, fortwährend in deinem Herzen. Tun wir das, Brüder, auf unsern Amtsgängen, im Studierzimmer, auch noch im Bett? Dann, nur dann tun wir unsere Arbeit recht; nur dann werden wir gute Predigten machen können. — Aber nicht nur das, nicht nur für die nächste Predigt. Sammeln wir uns vielmehr einen Vorrat auf alle Fälle durch anhaltendes Studium der Schrift und durch Vergleichung der Schriftleskture mit dem vielen Material, das große Gottesmänner uns hinterlassen haben. Treiben wir fort und fort Exegese, Dogmatik und Seelenstudium an unsern Gliedern. Wir müssen Material an Hand, im Herzen haben, damit wir in plötzlichen Nothfällen imstande sind, aus dem Schatz unsers Herzens Gutes zu geben, *ex tempore*! Wir müssen mit der Zeit dahin kommen, daß wir wirklich Gutes extemporieren können. Advokaten können es; sie kommen so oft in die Lage, daß ihre vorbereiteten Reden hinfällig werden, und sind doch durch Sammeln und üben und Erfahrung in der Lage, logisch zur Sache reden zu können. Sollten wir das nicht durch fortwährendes Gebet und anhaltende Meditation können, da wir doch den Heiligen Geist haben, der uns lehren wird, was und wie wir reden sollen; da wir im Dienste Gottes stehen und hohe Verheißungen haben, wenn wir treu sind im Dienst? Aber da heißt es eben sammeln, stets fertig sein für den Fall der Noth, damit man dann nicht in bittere Noth komme und große Gelegenheiten versäume.

Die zweite homiletische Regel, die keine Ausnahme erleidet: Willst du gute Predigten machen, so führe ein Leben der Meditation! Fürchte dich vor Plagiat! Bald wirst du das Stehlen dir angewöhnen und unfähig und unlustig werden zu eigener Arbeit — zur Meditation. Ein böses, erbärmliches Geschäft ist es, unter falscher Flagge segeln und sich mit fremden Federn schmücken. Aber auch ein sehr gefährliches Geschäft ist es — geistiger Selbstmord!

c. *Tentatio*. In der Anfechtung Erworbenes, Erprobtes, an sich selbst Erfahrenes, im Feuer der Trübsal Geläutertes ist absolut nötig zu einer guten Predigt. Man hört es sofort, nein, man fühlt es, ob ein Prediger nur Auswendiggelerntes oder am eigenen Herzen Erfahrenes in der Predigt bietet. Ein eigenartiger Magnetismus geht von einem aus der *tentatio* redenden Prediger aus. Es bohrt sich in das Herz der Zuhörer. Es ist ein eigenartiger Genuß und macht einen gewaltigen Eindruck, wenn ein alter, in der *tentatio* ergrauter Prediger redet. Wer von uns hätte das noch nicht selbst erfahren, wenn er solche Predigten hört? Solche aus der *tentatio* hervorgegangene Predigten üben eine unerklärliche Macht aufs Menschenherz aus: der Kontakt zwischen Herz und Herz ist hergestellt. So gehört denn zu einer guten Predigt das Durchleben des Wortes an dem Herzen des Predigers. Ich denke, deshalb sendet Gott auch seinen Predigern, die er liebhat, durch die er Großes ausrichten will, so viel mehr Kreuz, Trübsal, Leiden, Anfechtungen als andern. Alle großen Prediger sind durchs Feuer der

Trübsal geläutert. Wir wollen in dieser Kreuzeschule recht lernen und dann, wenn es schwer werden will, bedenken: Nun will Gott, von andern herrlichen Zwecken jetzt abgesehen, mich rechte Homiletik lehren. Luther: „Ohne Versuchung wird nimmer ein guter Prediger; es bleiben eitel Schwäzker, die selbst nicht wissen, wie und wohin sie reden.“

(Fortsetzung folgt.)

Literatur.

From Advent to Advent. Sermons on Free Texts. By the Rev. L. Buchheimer. Concordia Publishing House, St. Louis, Mo. Price, \$2.50.

Another volume of sermons by our esteemed brother, the pastor of the Church of Our Redeemer, St. Louis. Dr. Neve, of Springfield, O., not long ago pointed to Pastor Buchheimer as a Lutheran preacher who deserved being ranked with the best preachers of the day. The present volume contains sermons on free texts, all selected because of their appropriateness for the respective season of the church-year. As the title indicates, the series covers the span of one year, there being a sermon for every Sunday and for several of the church-festivals, such as Reformation-festival. The sermons exhibit the same excellent features as those found in the sermons published by Pastor Buchheimer several years ago. In addition to being Scriptural in content, they attract by freshness of thought, vivacity of presentation, and a remarkable felicity of phrase. In other words, these sermons possess literary qualities which it will be worth everybody's while to analyze. Much of their charm, in my judgment, lies in the author's avoiding to dwell painfully long on the obvious: he simply refuses to spend his time in hurling platitudes at his hearers. Here the question arises, of course, What is the obvious? What are platitudes? Evidently these terms are relative. What may be "all too clear" to one congregation may require elucidation from the point of view of another. In deciding on the course to be followed in this respect, the state of knowledge of the particular congregation one is interested in will have to be taken into account. My advice is this, Let a preacher study the sermons of Pastor Buchheimer to see what it means to keep a discourse free from platitudinous utterances, and then let him wisely adapt the style exemplified here to the needs of his own flock.

A.

Lesson Commentary for Sunday-Schools of the Lutheran Church. 1924. United Lutheran Publication House, Philadelphia. 322 pages, 6×9. Price, \$1.75.

While intended mainly for the use of the Sunday-schools in the United Lutheran Church, this *Lesson Commentary* seems to us very suitable for a purpose which the editors did not have in mind, that of sermon-making. In the comment on the various lessons and in the many suggested outlines there is a very large amount of material suitable for the sermonizer. There are 52 texts, 26 from the gospels (early ministry of Christ) and 24 from the Old Testament, treating the history of Israel from Abraham to Nehemiah. There is here much material for free texts and for sermon series. The price is very reasonable.

G.